

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 INR-10 PM-07 NEA-10 NSC-10 NSCE-00

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R 181714Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6982

INFO USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS

CINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

16TH AF

JUSMG-MAAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MADRID 6005

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR SP

SUBJ: SPANISH REQUEST FOR RELOCATION OF TANKER WING

REF: MADRID 6004

1. FOLLOWING ARE FULL TEXTS OF EXCHANGE OF LETTERS
BETWEEN AIR MINISTER SALVADOR AND 16TH AF COMMANDER,
MAJOR GENERAL FELICES, DEALING WITH SPANISH REQUEST THAT
THE USAF MOVE ITS TANKER WING FROM TORREJON AIR BASE TO
ANOTHER BASE IN SPAIN.

BEGIN TEXT.

THE AIR MINISTER

MADRID, 18 JUNE 1973

MAJOR GENERAL SANFORD K. MOATS
COMMANDER, 16TH AIR FORCE
TORREJON AIR BASE (MADRID)

MY DEAR GENERAL MOATS
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WITH REGARD TO OUR CONVERSATION ON TANKER AIRCRAFT, I ATTACH COPY OF THE MOST PERTINENT PORTION OF A LETTER RECENTLY RECEIVED FROM THE COMMANDER OF THE FIRST AIR REGION (MADRID).

AS YOU CAN SEE, WHEN I MENTIONED THE KC-135, THIS PASSED FROM THE HYPOTHETICAL STAGE TO REALITY AND HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY STATED, WHICH MAKES IT NECESSARY TO FIND A SOLUTION IN ORDER TO AVOID BEING SUBJECTED TO A GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY.

I ASSURE YOU THAT THE SUM TOTAL OF WHAT IS EXPRESSED IN THE ATTACHED LETTER, TOGETHER WITH WHAT I EXPRESSED TO YOU PERSONALLY, IS THE RESULT OF ISOLATED CONSIDERATIONS AND NOT THE RESULT OF AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWPOINTS.

I REQUEST THAT YOU LOOK FOR A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE WHICH, AS YOU KNOW, TROUBLES ME GREATLY AND LACK OF A DECISION FROM THIS MOMENT ON BECOMES MY PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY. BEST WISHES FROM YOUR GOOD FRIEND. /S/ JULIO SALVADOR Y DIAZ-BENJUMEA. END TEXT.

(ATTACHED TO AIR MINISTER'S LETTER). BEGIN TEXT.
AIR MINISTRY

EXTRACT OF DOCUMENT

"THE 98TH WING (USAF) IS STATIONED AT TORREJON AIR BASE WITH KC-135 AIRCRAFT WHICH, WITH CONSIDERABLE FREQUENCY, MAINTAIN UPWARDS OF 30 PARKED AIRCRAFT WHICH OPERATE WITH GREAT INTENSITY ON OCCASION.

THIS TRAFFIC CREATES AN UNCOMMON ACTIVITY IN ALL ITS RELATED SERVICES, PRODUCING EXTREME DELAYS IN THE DEPARTURE OF OTHER AIRCRAFT SINCE VERIFICATION IN WAITING AREAS AND UPPER END OF THE RUNWAY SHOWS THAT THESE ARE VERY METICULOUS AND LENGTHY.

THESE DELAYS ARE EVIDENT PRIMARILY DURING EXERCISE PERIODS AS WELL AS DURING ACTUAL SCRAMBLES.

IN ADDITION, THESE AIRCRAFT TAKING OFF COMPLETELY LOADED IN MOST INSTANCES CONSTITUTE A GRAVE DANGER TO THE POPULATION OF TORREJON DE ARDOZ AND ALCALA DE HENARES IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT. SHOULD THE LATTER OCCUR, THE EFFECTS WOULD BE DISASTROUS.

ACCORDINGLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT FOR YOUR CON-
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SIDERATION THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS UNIT OPERATING OUT OF ANOTHER BASE, WHICH COULD VERY WELL BE MORON WHICH HAS LESS TRAFFIC THAN TORREJON AND WITH ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES FAR REMOVED FROM TOWNS OR LARGE VILLAGES. ALL OF THIS WOULD AVOID THE STATED DANGERS TO THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, AS WELL AS HAVE BENEFICIAL RESULTS CONCERNING THE INTENSE TRAFFIC ON THIS BASE". END TEXT OF ATTACHMENT.

2. THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF THE REPLY OF COMMANDER,
16TH AF, WHICH WAS APPROVED BY THE EMBASSY. BEGIN TEXT.

EXCMO. SR. TENIENTE GENERAL 18 OCT 1973
D. JULIO SALVADOR Y DIAZ-BENJUMEA
MINISTRO DEL AIRE
MINISTERIO DEL AIRE
MADRID 8

MY DEAR GENERAL SALVADOR

IN REGARD TO OUR DISCUSSION ON THE SUBJECT OF MOVING
THE KC-135 TANKERS FROM TORREJON, WE HAVE CLOSELY EXAMINED
THIS PROBLEM AND THE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS EVOLVED.

FINANCIAL AND MANPOWER COSTS OF RELOCATING TANKERS
IN OTHER AREAS IN AND OUT OF SPAIN WERE EXAMINED. FRANKLY,
WE ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT MOVING THE KC-135'S IN THE NEAR
TERM IS FEASIBLE. THE TANKER UNIT AT TORREJON USES MANY
OF THE FACILITIES WHICH ARE MADE AVAILABLE BY THE 401ST
TACTICAL FIGHTER WING, SUCH AS THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, FIELD
MAINTENANCE AND AVIONICS SHOPS, ETC. THE MOVE TO MORON OR
ZARAGOZA WOULD BE MOST EXPENSIVE AS WE WOULD HAVE TO CREATE
AN INDEPENDENT, SELF-SUSTAINING UNIT. MOREOVER, MOVING
THE TANKERS ELSEWHERE OR TO ANOTHER EUROPEAN LOCATION
COULD REQUIRE A SHIFT OF OTHER FORCES INTO TORREJON IN ORDER
TO ACCOMMODATE THE TANKERS AT A NEW LOCATION. THIS ALSO
WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE.

AS YOU KNOW, MONEY IS A SEVERE PROBLEM IN OUR DEFENSE
BUDGET. IT IS VERY DOUBTFUL THAT THE U.S. CONGRESS WOULD
APPROPRIATE THE MONEY REQUIRED TO MOVE THE TANKERS. MORE
IMPORTANTLY, CONGRESS WOULD EXPECT US TO CONSIDER UNIT
MOVES ONLY IN THE OVERALL CONTEXT OF RENEWAL OF THE 1970
AGREEMENT, AND AFTER THOROUGH CONSIDERATION OF THE COMPLETE
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USAF BASING REQUIREMENT IN EUROPE -- NOT ONLY FOR KC-135'S
BUT FOR OTHER AIRCRAFT AS WELL. THEREFORE, WE

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-20 INR-10 PM-07 NEA-10 NSC-10 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6983

INFO USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS

CINCEUR

CINCUSAFE

16TH AF

JUSMG-MAAG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MADRID 6005

BELIEVE THAT A MUCH MORE PALATABLE APPROACH WOULD BE TO CONSIDER THE KC-135 MOVE AS PART OF THE OVERALL NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE AGREEMENT.

THE USAF HAS BEEN IN SPAIN FOR SOME TWENTY YEARS NOW, AND DURING THIS PERIOD THE BASING POSTURE WAS VERY CAREFULLY WORKED OUT BY OUR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS. WE ENJOY THE USE OF FACILITIES AT TORREJON, INCLUDING THE STATIONING OF A TARKER WING THERE, UNDER SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS ESTABLISHED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. THIS FACT COMPELS ME TO THINK THAT ANY SUCH MOVE TO ALTER THESE UNDERSTANDINGS WOULD ALSO HAVE TO TAKE PLACE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. ALTHOUGH WE SHARE WITH YOU THE HOPE THAT THIS WILL NOT BE NECESSARY, YOU MAY WISH TO DISCUSS THE MATTER AT A JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING. I AM SURE THAT A MUTUALLY AGREED-UPON POSITION CAN BE WORKED OUT IN THE FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATION FOR RENEWAL OF THE AGREEMENT.

OUR AIR FORCE PLACES THE HIGHEST PRIORITY ON FLIGHT SAFETY. ALTHOUGH THE KC-135 HAS AN ENVIABLE SAFETY RECORD, WE RECOGNIZE THAT ACCIDENTS CAN AND DO HAPPEN IN AIR OPERATION. HOWEVER, WE HAVE TAKEN OPERATIONAL MEASURES TO FURTHER MINIMIZE ANY ACCIDENT POTENTIAL THAT THE KC-135 MIGHT HAVE. THE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR TANKER OFFLOADS ARE CRITICALLY EXAMINED ON A DAILY BASIS. CONFIDENTIAL

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TANKER GROSS WEIGHTS HAVE BEEN REDUCED SUBSTANTIALLY, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, TO IMPROVE TAKEOFF PERFORMANCES. ON ALL TAKEOFFS, THE AIRCRAFT ARE THREE-ENGINE CAPABLE AFTER REACHING REFUSAL SPEED.

BY WORKING WITH MADRID TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS, WE HAVE BUILT INCREASED FLEXIBILITY INTO OUR DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

IN ORDER TO MINIMIZE KC-135 CONFLICTS WITH CIVIL TRAFFIC. ALSO, KC-135 AIRCRAFT ARE POSITIONED ADJACENT TO THE ACTIVE RUNWAY AND DO NOT TAXI ONTO THE ACTIVE RUNWAY UNTIL A TAKEOFF CLEARANCE IS OBTAINED TO AVOID CONFLICT WITH OTHER TRAFFIC. MAXIMUM TAKEOFF TIME TOLERANCES ARE PROVIDED AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TO ALLOW THEM THE GREATEST POSSIBLE FLEXIBILITY. PRIOR SELECTION OF COMPATIBLE TAKEOFF TIMES ARE COORDINATED WITH APPROPRIATE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AUTHORITIES. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN CIVIL AIR TRAFFIC EVERYWHERE. THIS IS A SIGN OF THE TIMES, AND NO DOUBT MADRID TRAFFIC WILL CONTINUE TO INCREASE IN THE YEARS AHEAD.

WE SHARE WITH YOU THE HOPE THAT OUR RESPECTIVE FORCES CONTINUE TO WORK TOGETHER FOR YEARS TO COME. WE WELCOME ANY SUGGESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE TO MINIMIZE THE ACCIDENT POTENTIAL OR TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONTROL PROCEDURES. WE WANT TO WORK WITH YOU, IN ANY WAY WE CAN, TO MAINTAIN THE VERY CLOSE AND SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP THAT THE SPANISH AIR FORCE AND THE U.S. AIR FORCE HAVE ENJOYED THROUGH THE YEARS. I AM CONFIDENT THAT BY WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN ARRIVE AT MUTUALLY AGREEABLE SOLUTIONS TO ANY EXISTING PROBLEMS.

SINCERELY,
SALVADOR E. FELICES
MAJOR GENERAL, USAF
VICE COMMANDER

END TEXT.
RIVERO

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